

SENSITIVE

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WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 27 November 1971

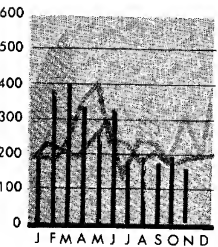
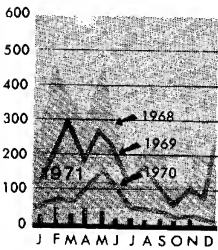
NSA Declassification/Release Instructions on File.

For the President Only

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SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

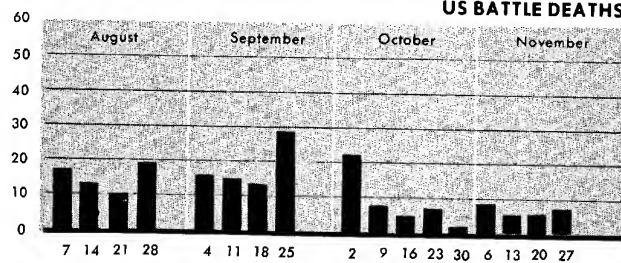
1968-1971
Weekly average for each month



AUGUST 1971 - NOVEMBER 1971
Weekly data as reported

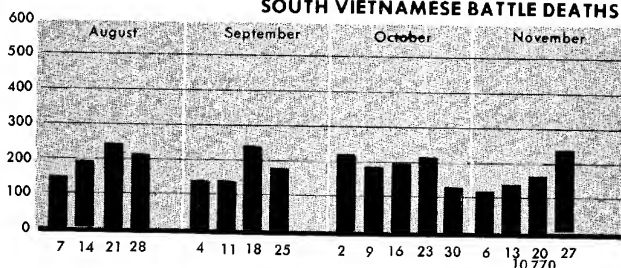
US BATTLE DEATHS

increased from last week's five to seven.



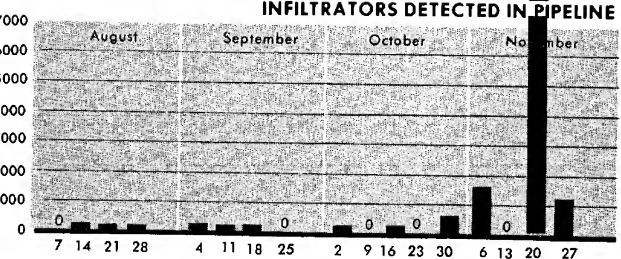
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS

rose sharply to 230 from the 159 of last week. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.



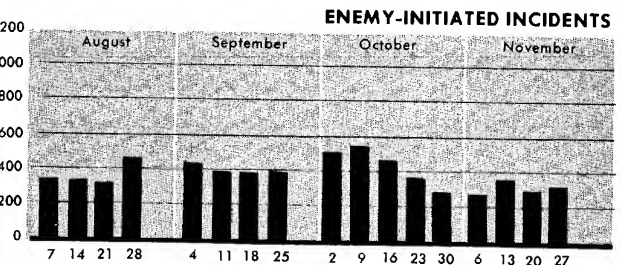
INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE

stand at three groups with a total strength of some 1,123. The number of infiltrators noted since 1 October 1971 is now an estimated 14,200 - 15,700.



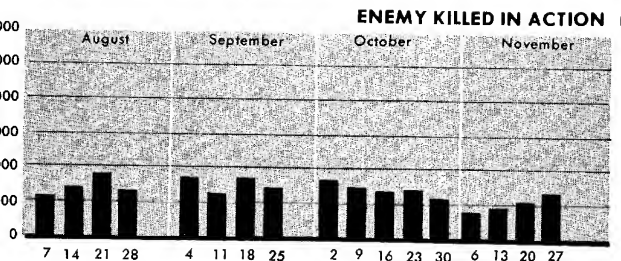
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS

increased to 308 from last week's 279.



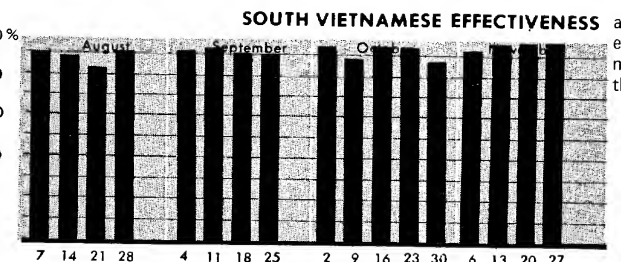
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION

rose sharply to 1,326 from the 1,010 reported last week.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS

as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces remained at the same level for the third consecutive week -- 98%.



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

In South Vietnam, enemy-initiated activity has continued at relatively low levels throughout the country. The Communists continue to maintain sufficient forces in the vicinity of the DMZ to pose a significant threat to Allied forces and installations in this area, but there are currently no indicators suggesting that any major offensive activity is being considered. In other parts of the country, most enemy main force units are not positioned to constitute a major threat in the immediate future. In Military Region 2, a part of the North Vietnamese 66th Regiment has deployed southwest from the tri-border region to the vicinity of Base Area 702 in Cambodia. From this area it can easily operate against western Pleiku Province where, recently, there has been some increase in enemy-initiated activity.

In north Laos, the government operation near Luang Prabang has ended though friendly forces are patrolling north of the capital and meeting some resistance. In the Plain of Jars area, there has been an increase in enemy patrol activity and probing of government positions, as well as heavier enemy shelling. Reinforcements arriving from North Vietnam over the past two weeks appear to be consolidating in the enclaves around the PDJ. All indicators point to the imminent eruption of a major drive to sweep government forces from the Plain. In south Laos last week government forces under increasing enemy pressure had to withdraw from the central Panhandle town of Muong Phalane. In the lower Panhandle there has been a relatively intense level of fighting generated by three ongoing government operations. In the largest of these operations (THAO LA), friendly forces had surprisingly light opposition while capturing their two major objectives north of the Bolovens Plateau -- Thateng and Ban Phone. The enemy made an unsuccessful counterattack against government forces occupying Thateng.

During the week in Cambodia, combat activity was at a low level except for the Phnom Penh Special Military Region, where sporadic action continues close to the city. In the CHENLA II area, the Cambodian Army General Staff has abandoned plans to reopen Route 6 between Tang Kouk and Baray. Elsewhere, the Communists continue their efforts to interdict major lines of communication to the capital. South Vietnamese forces participating in Operation THOAN THANG 01/71 continue to encounter light resistance. They are now operating in the area around their logistic base on Route 7 near Khana and have elements near Dambe on Route 75.

Enemy Infiltration

North Vietnamese personnel-logistics activity continues apace. During the past week, three personnel infiltration groups totaling 1,123 men were detected in North Vietnam, raising the estimate of infiltrators moving toward South Vietnam-Cambodia since 1 October 1971 to some 14,200-15,700. Truck movement continued at a high rate with most traffic concentrated near the entry routes from North Vietnam. Logistics activity is expected to increase further and spread southward during the coming weeks since the Panhandle road net is generally in excellent condition and good weather is likely to continue. The Communists have made a major effort this season to improve their overall air defense capability in northern Laos as well as along the logistics corridor in southern Laos. To protect the infiltration-logistics system, two to three antiaircraft artillery (AAA) regiments, part of a surface-to-air missile regiment, and smaller AAA elements subordinate to the Binh Trams have now moved into place in the Laos Panhandle along with an improved air-warning network. Additionally, elements of two AAA regiments are preparing for operations in north Laos, suggesting that Hanoi's air defense system in Laos is being strengthened from the 20th parallel southward to the Cambodian border.

South Vietnam Developments

President Thieu appears to be making progress in his efforts to consolidate his position, and he is at least temporarily in a stronger position than he has ever been in before. Anti-government veteran and student groups, which formed the core of the anti-Thieu demonstrations during the election campaign, are showing no interest in resuming the struggle. Big Minh has virtually retired from public activity, Ky is seeking an assignment in the military, and even the opposition Buddhists are planning to work within the system. Thieu's efforts to strengthen his political support received a further boost last week when the Progressive Nationalist Movement, one of the more effective political groups, decided to join Thieu's projected political party and to cooperate with the pro-government bloc in the Lower House. If this agreement holds up, Thieu will have firm control of the Lower House with about 100 of the 159 deputies subject to his guidance. The government has already demonstrated its strength by winning two-thirds of the votes of those present on a procedural matter which will enable the government to put its own choices into the key Lower House leadership posts.

So far, there is little indication that Thieu plans to change his political style. Thieu's staff is using the customary threats in lining up his support in the Assembly, and vote buying is already a feature of the new legislature. Plans are reportedly afoot to find a legal way to close about half of the Saigon newspapers, with the opposition press a primary target. At least one province chief has been requested to forward to Saigon the names of those public servants or ARVN personnel who had opposed the one-man presidential race. Such moves, if carried too far, could eventually rekindle latent opposition, particularly if the economy should falter. But if Thieu avoids major misplays, he has a golden opportunity to use his strengthened position to enhance both the cohesion and effectiveness of his government in the months ahead.

Communist Developments

The Pham Van Dong visit to Peking ended with the issuance of a joint communique, which, in addition to the usual verbiage regarding Vietnamese-Chinese solidarity and Hanoi's estimate that the Communists are in an "excellent" and victorious position in Indochina, reformulated in harder terms the two basic demands contained in points one and two of the seven-point settlement package. For example, the demand is added to point one that the U.S. cease all air and naval activities against "both North and South Vietnam," and the demand is added to point two that the U.S. "withdraw support from and relinquish all its commitments" to the Thieu government.

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